

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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From the General Manager/CEO



New Enterprise REC Annual Meeting...We'll see you there!

By Mark Morrison

DID YOU know every cooperative is required to conduct an annual meeting of the membership to elect directors, share financial information, vote on other matters such as changes to the bylaws and, of course — there are the great door prizes!

The New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) Annual Meeting is a community gathering where we can meet new neighbors or catch up with old acquaintances. As our lives get busier and more of our interactions with others are online, we must renew the value of face-to-face human connections. Very few organizations are uniquely positioned like New Enterprise REC to bring together our local communities.

While rural Americans probably do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors (in part because we need to), it is not something we should take for granted. The simple act of smiling, saying hello and shaking someone's hand truly lifts both parties.

The annual meeting is designed to take care of the business of your co-op and the equally important business of building a real sense of community. All cooperatives serve both an economic and social purpose. While safe, reliable and affordable electric power is crucial to our mission, improving the quality of life for all consumer-members is at the core of what we do every day.

Your electric cooperative was incorporated in 1938 with the first annual meeting held June 4, 1940. An excerpt from the minutes of that meeting follows: "The Annual Meeting of the New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative,

Inc. was held in the Loysburg Grange Hall, June 4, 1940. A supper was served by the Grange beginning at 5 o'clock. At 8 o'clock the meeting was called to order by the President, E.W. Van Horn. Mr. Van Horn gave a review of the work done by the Cooperative up to date."

These minutes document a solo by Mabel Detwiler accompanied by Glen Ritchey, talks by representatives of General Electric Company and Rumsey Electric Company, as well as a movie, "Blame it on Love," by General Electric Company. The first group of directors included: E.W. Van Horn, C.P. Holsinger, G.E. Gladfelter, J.A. Appleman, H.L. King, J.L. Guyer, H.R. Snowberger, John Guyer and Carl Hoover.

The meeting is a few months away, but we urge you to consider marking the date on your calendar. You will see information in a separate mailing to consumer-members as well as within a future *Penn Lines* issue. If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past or if it has been a few years, we urge you to take the time to be with your fellow co-op consumer-members.

We get out of life what we put into it. New Enterprise REC is connected to you by more than just power lines. We are your neighbors, and we look forward to seeing you at your annual meeting. This year's annual meeting is June 12, 2018, at the Northern Bedford County High School and includes a meal from 4:45 – 6:45 p.m., prior to the business meeting, which will begin at 7 p.m. Please join us and enjoy the fellowship with friends, employees, directors and staff of your electric cooperative. See you there! 

World's most expensive dirt

Dust dollars off your energy bill by regularly changing air filters

The most expensive dirt in the world may lurk in your home's heating and cooling system. If neglected, dust collecting on the equipment's air filter could increase your energy bills hundreds of dollars every year and result in expensive repair or replacement costs.

Dirty filters cause a system to work harder and break down faster. That's because unfiltered dust and grime work into critical parts, creating friction that causes unnecessary wear and, eventually, failure.

As you move around your home you drive dust into the air from carpets, drapes, and furniture. Pets generate dust particles by shedding, grooming and tracking in dirt from outside.

Regardless of where it comes from, dust trapped in a heating and cooling system air filter leads to several problems, including:

- ▶ Reduced air flow in the home and up to 15 percent higher operating costs.
- ▶ Costly duct cleaning or replacement.

Electrical safety tips for kids

At New Enterprise REC, we understand your child's health and well-being are your top priority. With more than 140,000 electrical fires occurring each year, knowledge of electrical safety is necessary to ensuring your loved ones stay safe. Here are a few tips you can share with your little ones:

Electrical fires are caused when a wire or electrical device overheats. It is important to make sure your children understand that water cannot extinguish this type of fire. Only fire extinguishers can be used to remedy this situation.

In addition to the previous tip, it is *never a good idea to mix water with electricity*. Keep blow dryers, radios and any other electrical devices away from all water, especially those used in a bathroom.

Keep metal objects out of appliances and plugs. If a piece of toast gets stuck in the toaster, never use a metal knife

- ▶ Lowered system efficiency.

Every time a system with a dirty filter kicks on, the day of reckoning — total replacement — draws closer. To avoid this expense, change filters monthly when a system is in regular use. Discuss cleaning the unit and ductwork with your heating and cooling service professional.

While most types of filters must be replaced, a few filters are reusable. They're available in a variety of types and efficiencies, rated by a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV). MERV, a method developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, tests filter effectiveness. The higher the MERV number, the higher the filter's effectiveness at keeping dust out of your system.

To learn more about how to save energy around your home, visit: www.energysavers.gov or www.TogetherWeSave.com. 

to retrieve it. Unplug the toaster, and use a different tool or utensil to remove the toast. *Remember, only plugs should go in outlets.* Sticking fingers or other objects in outlets may result in an electrical shock.

It's always a good idea to *turn lights off when they are not in use*. This will save your family money on your electric bill and prevent electrical fires from overheated bulbs.

Kids will be kids, and they love the great outdoors. *Remind them to avoid overhead power lines.* Whether they are climbing trees or flying kites or remote-controlled toys, they should always be mindful of what is above.

Talk to your children about the importance of electrical safety, and more importantly, lead by example — because you never know who's watching. For more information about electrical safety, visit www.newenterpriserec.com or esfi.org.

Are you wasting your money on DIRT?

Dirty air filters cause a heating and cooling system to work harder and break down faster. That's because unfiltered dust and grime works into critical parts, creating friction that causes unnecessary wear and, eventually, failure.

How does a dirty air filter cost you?

- Reduces air flow in the home, leading to up to 15 percent higher operating costs
- Leads to costly duct cleaning or replacement
- Lowers system efficiency

To avoid these expenses, change filters monthly when your heating and cooling system's in regular use. Discuss cleaning the unit and ductwork with your heating and cooling service professional.

Learn more ways to save at www.energysavers.gov.

Source: High Performance HVAC, U.S. Department of Energy

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs):

Prevention from shock hazards

What is a GFCI?

A ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) can help prevent electrocution. If a person's body starts to receive a shock, the GFCI senses this and cuts off the power before he/she can get injured.

GFCIs are generally installed where electrical circuits may accidentally come into contact with water. They are most often found in kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms, or even outside or in the garage where electric power tools might be used.

What is a ground fault?

According to the National Electrical Code, a "ground fault" is a conducting connection (whether intentional or accidental) between any electric conductor and any conducting material that is grounded or that may become grounded. Electricity always wants to find a path to the ground. In a ground fault, electricity has found a path to the ground, but it is a path the electricity was never intended to be on, such as through a person's body.

Because of this potential for shock, GFCI protection is used to protect human life.

How does a GFCI work?

The GFCI will "sense" the difference in the amount of electricity flowing into the circuit to that flowing out, even in amounts of current as small as 4 or 5 milliamps. The GFCI reacts quickly (less than one-tenth of a second) to trip or shut off the circuit.

What are the types of GFCIs?

There are three types of GFCIs. The most often used "receptacle-type" GFCI, similar to a common wall outlet, is the type with which most consumers are familiar. Additionally, circuit breaker GFCIs are often used as replacements for standard circuit breakers and provide GFCI protection to all receptacles on that individual circuit. Temporary or portable GFCIs are frequently used in construction and in outdoor settings with electric

tools, mowers, trimmers, and similar devices. They should not be used as a permanent alternative to a regular GFCI. Temporary GFCIs should be tested prior to every use.

How should GFCIs be tested?

Many consumers don't check their GFCIs to verify they are working.

GFCIs are electronic devices that can be damaged or wear out. The electrical receptacle in a GFCI may continue to function, even if the GFCI circuit no longer works. If this is the case, have a qualified electrician replace it as soon as possible.

GFCIs should be tested monthly to ensure they are in working condition. Whether you have

a receptacle or circuit breaker GFCI, pushing the TEST button should turn off the power to the circuit. For the receptacle-type GFCI, pushing the TEST button should cause the RESET button to pop up. (Remember to push the RESET button to re-establish power and protection.) For the circuit breaker-type GFCI, pushing the TEST button should cause the handle to move to the tripped position. (Remember to reset the handle to re-establish power and protection.)

When should you test GFCIs?

GFCIs should be checked monthly to determine if they are operating properly. A portable GFCI should be used outside with various electrical power tools (i.e., drills, mowers, trimmers) and should be tested before each use.

Where should GFCIs be used?

It is recommended that GFCIs be installed in areas where appliances and power tools are used in close proximity to water. Tap water or wet

objects are able to conduct electricity very easily and can connect your body to a ground potential, thus increasing your chances of receiving a shock from a ground fault. Appliances that have built-in GFCI protection, as now required for hair dryers, may not need additional GFCI protection, but there

are still many appliances not equipped with GFCI protection.

What is nuisance tripping of a GFCI?

It takes only 5 mA (0.005 A) of current leakage from the hot wire to the ground to cause a GFCI to trip. A small amount of leakage current may be difficult to avoid in some normal circuits. Hand-held power tools do not cause a tripping problem if the tool is maintained in good condition. Some

stationary motors, such as a bathroom vent fan or fluorescent lighting fixtures, may produce enough leakage to cause nuisance tripping. Another problem may be a long circuit with many splices. If possible, keep GFCI circuits less than 100 feet long. To avoid nuisance tripping, a GFCI should not supply:

- ▶ Circuits longer than 100 feet,
- ▶ Fluorescent or other types of electric-discharge lighting fixtures, or
- ▶ Permanently installed electric motors.

How does a GFCI differ from an AFCI?

Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) are safety devices for homes that provide enhanced protection from fires caused by unsafe home wiring conditions.

AFCIs should not be confused with GFCIs. While both AFCIs and GFCIs are important safety devices, they have different functions. AFCIs are intended to address fire hazards; GFCIs address shock hazards. ⚡



Know the difference between electrical facts and myths

When it comes to electricity, you have to know the facts. It might save your life one day. Here are some common electrical myths proven false:

- ▶ **Myth:** Once a line is down, it is dead.
Fact: The electric current does not always turn off when a power line is down. Even if lines do not show signs of life (arcing, smoking, popping), they can still hold dangerous electrical current. Always treat a downed wire as energized because there is no way for you to know by looking whether it is hot or not. Just always stay away, and keep others away.
- ▶ **Myth:** All power lines are insulated.
Fact: Most power lines are actually not insulated. The coating on the lines is actually for weather proofing and will not offer any protection from the electrical current. Even if a power line is insulated, it can crack due to weather, reducing its safety. No matter the case, it is never safe to touch a power line.
- ▶ **Myth:** There is no need to worry about power lines when digging a hole.
Fact: Always call 811 before you dig to have a professional come to your home and locate buried public utility lines free of charge. No matter the size of a digging project, if you come into contact with a buried power line, you could be electrocuted or seriously injured.

- ▶ **Myth:** It is safe to work around a power line at home as long as direct contact is not made.
Fact: Always keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet from power lines. This goes for ladders, pool skimmers, pruning poles and any other equipment. Always be aware of where power lines are so you do not risk electric shock. If you are trimming trees or attempting any do-it-yourself project near power lines, always call professionals for the job.
- ▶ **Myth:** It is safe to remove the third prong from a plug.
Fact: The third prong is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of shock or electrocution. That prong grounds the electrical current. If the outlet is only fit for a two-prong plug, replace the outlet with a three-prong outlet or a GFCI outlet.
- ▶ **Myth:** Tires insulate my car from electrical dangers.
Fact: If a wire falls on your car while you are in it, the tires do not keep you from being injured by the electricity. The vehicle is the path to ground for the electrical current, so while you remain in the car, you are safe. The moment you step out of the car, you are the path to ground and in danger. If you find yourself in a situation where your car has hit a utility pole or power lines have fallen, stay in the car and warn others to stay away. Wait for a utility crew to cut the power. Only exit the car if it is on fire. Make sure to not touch the ground and the car at the same time. Jump from the car, keeping your feet together, and hop away from the scene.

Past-due accounts

ARE you having trouble paying your electric bill? If so, please call Brawna at our office to set up a payment agreement. Your account doesn't have to be past due to set up an agreement. Should you see you can't pay the current charges, call to make an arrangement right away. Your monthly payments will be much smaller than waiting until you are 30 or 60 days past due.

Once an agreement is made, it needs to be followed as stated. If a payment is missed, your account will be subject to disconnection. When a meter is disconnected, the total bill plus charges up to the point of disconnection plus additional fees will need to be paid before reconnection can happen.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program will be open until April 6, 2018. This program helps low-income families pay their heating bills. You don't need to be on public assistance or have an unpaid bill to qualify for help.

There are two types of grants available: cash and crisis. Cash grants are a

one-time payment that is sent directly to the utility or fuel provider. Cash grants range from \$200 to \$1,000. The assistance is based on household size, income and type of heating.

Crisis grants are for an emergency situation where you are in danger of losing your heat. You can receive more than one crisis grant during the season. The maximum benefit amount is \$500. Emergency situations include:

- ▶ Broken heating equipment or leaking lines that must be repaired or replaced
- ▶ Lack of fuel
- ▶ Termination of electric service, or
- ▶ Danger of being without fuel or of having utility service terminated

To apply for this program, go to www.compass.state.pa.us or call your county assistance office:

Bedford County — 800-542-8584 or 814-623-6127

Fulton County — 800-222-8563 or 717-485-3151

Huntingdon County — 800-237-7674 or 814-643-1170

When you apply, you will need the following information:

- ▶ Names of people in your household,
- ▶ Dates of birth for all household members
- ▶ Social Security numbers for all household members
- ▶ Proof of income for all household members, and
- ▶ A recent heating bill

You may qualify for a LIHEAP grant if your household income meets the income guidelines. ☀

New policy for disconnection for non-payment

Effective January 2018, New Enterprise REC employees will no longer reconnect an account disconnected for non-payment after regular business hours 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Should you not be able to pay your monthly electric bill, please call Brawna at 814-766-3221 or 800-270-3177, extension 4602, to make a payment agreement. Do not delay calling.